

that principle to all those who have learning difficulties but are still learning-able. I am referring specifically to dyslexia, in which I have a deep interest because I have a grandchild who has dyslexia. This tie I am wearing today came from a private institution which offers training in dyslexia. My grandson is also in a private school which specializes in dyslexia. We are simply not doing the job in public education to take care of these students, and we must in the future.

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Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into a colloquy with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

As the gentleman from Ohio knows, I had filed an amendment to restore the science assessment provisions that were included in H.R. 1, as introduced, that would essentially mirror the science assessment language in the Senate bill.

Specifically, my amendment would have required States to assess student performance in science by the 2007–2008 school year. A similar amendment was offered in the last Congress to H.R. 2, where it passed with a vote of 360–62.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. EHLERS. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. That is correct. I am very familiar with the gentleman's amendment.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I understand the gentleman supported making this amendment in order and that it was left out in the amendments that we are considering in this bill.

Mr. BOEHNER. If the gentleman will continue to yield, the gentleman has been a leader in improving science education in our Nation's schools, and I was looking forward to working with the gentleman to debate this issue on the floor. Unfortunately, the amendment was not made in order.

Mr. EHLERS. Would the gentleman agree to include the science assessment amendment in the conference committee to H.R. 1?

Mr. BOEHNER. As the gentleman noted, similar language is in the Senate bill, and I would pledge to work with the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) when we get to conference to ensure ESEA legislation reflects our Nation's dire need for closing the international achievement gap in math and science.

Mr. Chairman, I pledge to work to develop concrete strategies to address this important need.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for yielding the time, and I thank him for his leadership. I look forward to continuing our work together, not only on this amendment, but also on the entire bill.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the

gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE).

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, this education bill represents the first real bipartisan effort of this Congress. I commend the leaders from both sides of the aisle who have put it together. I just hope it stays bipartisan for the sake of our children and our home communities.

The bill will help local school districts meet some of our most pressing education challenges. There is a strong emphasis on early reading and a commitment to title I and special education funding. The bill expands public school choice, which is welcome news in my district where magnet schools have been especially successful. The bill also provides resources and specific remedies to turn around low-performing schools.

In these next hours of debate, we are going to face amendments that could derail this bipartisan success. We will face an amendment to provide public funding for private school vouchers, which would siphon money away from public education, not strengthen it.

We will face amendments to weaken the link between dollars and results. We must maintain accountability to ensure that our children are learning.

Of course, when you have a truly bipartisan piece of legislation, no one gets everything he or she wants. I would have liked to have seen more attention paid to reducing class size. We know that smaller class size improves student learning, especially in the early years. We need to build more schools and hire more teachers to get class size down and to improve the quality of what is going on in the classroom.

Schools in my area are bursting at the seams with thousands of students going to school in hundreds of trailers. We have crumbling classrooms and outdated facilities. Over 90 percent of children in kindergarten through third grade in my district are learning in overcrowded classrooms. There are 24,000 children trying to learn in classrooms with 25 or more students.

So we need local school districts to build more schools; and when new classrooms are built, we need quality teachers to teach in them.

In my State, we have a staggering need to hire 80,000 new teachers in the next 10 years. I actually think that the teacher shortage is the education issue of the next decade, and neither party has paid sufficient attention to it. Without quality teachers in the classroom, no other education reforms we talk about are going to work.

But today, Mr. Chairman, we have a chance to take an important first step, a bipartisan step in the right direction. We can improve American public education in this country together. Vote for the bill and against crippling amendments.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to enter into a colloquy with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

The current language of H.R. 1 requires that a school identified for improvement must provide all students enrolled in that school with the option to transfer to another public school within the same local educational agency.

I am concerned that this language may not provide public school choice to students in many rural areas. For example, in my mostly rural congressional district, a school district is often comprised of a limited number of schools, sometimes including only a few elementary schools and one high school.

With few schools from which to choose, there is little or no choice within the same school district and, therefore, no relief for those students.

Mr. Chairman, I am hopeful that as the legislative process continues, the bill can include language such as I proposed to the Committee on Rules which will allow a student trapped in a failing school to transfer to another public school, regardless of the school district.

Will the chairman continue to examine this issue during the conference with the Senate?

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WICKER. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to work with the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) to address this issue in conference. H.R. 1, as we know, provides for within district school choice and then allows for the establishment of cooperative agreements with neighboring school districts, to the extent practical, if there are no higher-performing schools in the original district.

I understand the gentleman's concerns about meaningful public school choice in rural areas where choices are limited, and I can assure the gentleman that I will work in conference towards giving students at low-performing schools the option of transferring to another public school outside of their current school district.

Mr. WICKER. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for this assurance.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ).

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to speak in support of this legislation. This bill is proof that friends on both sides of the aisle, even those who may not agree often, can come together in a bipartisanship way to accomplish a goal.

We cannot hold public schools accountable for improving education unless we give them the funds to ensure